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SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION AND TO YOUTH, AGEING, DISABLED PERSONS AND THE FAMILY

International Year of Older Persons: towards a society for all ages

Note by the Secretariat

By its resolution 1997/18, the Economic and Social Council recommended to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution entitled "International Year of Older Persons: towards a society for all ages". The text of the draft resolution is reproduced below.

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 47/5 of 16 October 1992, in which it decided to observe the year 1999 as the International Year of Older Persons,

Also recalling its resolution 40/30 of 29 November 1985, in which it expressed its conviction that older persons must be considered an important and necessary element in the development process at all levels within a given society,

Mindful of the need to promote adherence to the United Nations Principles for Older Persons, as adopted in its resolution 46/91 of 16 December 1991,

Recalling Economic and Social Council resolution 1993/22 of 27 July 1993, in which the Council invited Member States to strengthen their national mechanisms on ageing, inter alia, to enable them to serve as national focal points for the preparations for and observance of the Year,

Further recalling the relevant provisions of the Copenhagen Declaration and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development,[1] the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development[2] and the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights,[3] as well as of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action[4] and the Habitat Agenda,[5]

Keeping in mind that the ageing of societies in the twentieth century, unprecedented in the history of humankind, is a major challenge for all societies and requires a fundamental change in the way in which societies organize themselves and view older persons,

1. Encourages all States, the United Nations system and all other actors, in reaching out for a future society for all ages, to take advantage of the International Year of Older Persons so as to increase awareness of the challenge of the demographic ageing of societies, the individual and social needs of older persons, the contribution of older persons to societies and the need for a change in attitudes towards older persons;

2. Welcomes the activities undertaken by States, United Nations organizations and bodies and non-governmental organizations in preparation for the observance of the Year and encourages them to continue their efforts;

3. Invites States to take account of the increasing number and percentage of older persons in need of help;

4. Also invites States to develop comprehensive strategies at the national, regional and local levels to meet the increase in demand for care and support for older persons as individuals, within their families and communities, and within institutions, bearing in mind the changing socio-economic, technological and cultural environment;

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[1] Report of the World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen, 6-12 March 1995 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.8), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

[2] Report of the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 5-13 September 1994 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.XIII.18), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

[3] Report of the World Conference on Human Rights, Vienna, 14-25 June 1993 (A/CONF.157/24 (Part I)), chap. III.

[4] Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

[5] Report of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), Istanbul, 3-14 June 1996 (A/CONF.165/14), chap. I, annex II.

5. Encourages States, with the support of United Nations organizations, bodies and programmes and non-governmental organizations to formulate policies and programmes on ageing with a view to offering older persons opportunities to utilize their experience and knowledge to promote a society for all ages based on solidarity between generations, so that they can contribute to and benefit from full participation in society;

6. Further encourages States to establish a national focal point and formulate national programmes for the Year, bearing in mind the conceptual framework referred to in General Assembly resolution 50/141 of 21 December 1995;

7. Calls upon States to include a gender dimension in their national programmes for the Year;

8. Encourages States to consider establishing ad hoc, broad-based national coordinating mechanisms for the Year in order to enhance, inter alia, collaboration with representatives of civil society;

9. Invites States to consider convening high-level and other meetings at the regional level to discuss the theme "A society for all ages";

10. Invites non-governmental organizations, including those specialized in the question of older persons, to develop programmes and projects for the Year, particularly at the local level, in cooperation, inter alia, with local authorities, community leaders, enterprises, the media and schools, and encourages them to support and participate in the appropriate national coordinating mechanisms;

11. Encourages relevant United Nations funds and programmes and specialized agencies, non-governmental organizations and the private sector to support local, national and international programmes and projects for the Year and also encourages them, in particular the United Nations Development Programme, as well as international financial institutions, to ensure that the concerns and contributions of older persons are integrated into their development programmes;

12. Emphasizes that activities for the Year should be initiated primarily at the national level;

13. Invites national and international development agencies, bodies and international financial institutions to explore feasible approaches to improving the access of older persons to credit training and appropriate technologies for income generation, and the participation of older persons in family enterprises, community enterprises and microenterprises;

14. Welcomes contributions by the Commission on the Status of Women on the topic of older women in relation to the Year;

15. Encourages the Secretary-General to allocate sufficient resources for promoting and coordinating activities for the Year, bearing in mind General Assembly resolution 47/5 in which it was decided that observance of the Year

would be supported from resources of the regular budget for the biennium 1998-1999 and from voluntary contributions;

16. Invites States to consider actively supporting the United Nations Secretariat in the preparation and implementation of the projects for the Year, inter alia, through voluntary financial or personnel contributions;

17. Welcomes the continuing efforts of the Secretariat to promote information exchange for 1999 and beyond, inter alia, through regular publication of the Bulletin on Ageing, and invites the agencies, bodies and programmes of the United Nations system to consider placing special emphasis on the theme "A society for all ages" in their publications, including the Human Development Report;

18. Invites the Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat to consider producing a logo and press kit as well as an exhibit for the Year and invites the United Nations Postal Administration to consider producing stamps on the theme "A society for all ages";

19. Requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session on the system-wide implementation of the present resolution;

20. Also requests the Secretary-General to officially launch the International Year for Older Persons in 1998, on the occasion of the International Day of Older Persons;

21. Decides to devote four plenary meetings at its fifty-fourth session to the follow-up to the Year, which should take place at an appropriate global policy-making level.